provision for compulsory religious instruction. In February 1923, 659
however, a Bill submitted to a referendum by the Christian-Democratic party (Lutheran), making religious instruction free and compulsory, was adopted by 330,000 votes to 130,000.[1] In 1926 a Law on the Religious Communities was passed, disestablishing and disendowing all religious bodies, while permitting them full autonomy and freedom to carry on their spiritual tasks. Under the dictatorship, however, a new law of 1934 imposed a certain degree of State control over the churches. Their statutes were subject to confirmation by the Government, and the decisions of the Church Councils could be vetoed by the Minister of the Interior, while the President of the State might require the appointment of other or additional candidates at the elections of the heads of the churches. All priests and [793] ●
divines must be Estonian citizens, and services must be held in the language of the parishioners, except where ancient church languages were used. The churches were allowed their own courts, whose decisions might be provided with an executionary clause by the lay courts.

Latvia. Since the time of the Reformation, when the Baltic Barons 795
changed over from the Roman Catholic to the Lutheran faith, the 162
majority of the inhabitants have been Lutherans. The Province of Latgale, however, owing to its historic connexion with Poland, has remained Catholic to this day. During the period of Russian rule the Orthodox Church enjoyed a privileged position.

Complete religious liberty exists in Latvia to-day. The churches 659
are autonomous, but they receive small State subsidies, and clerical affairs are subject to the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. In view of the large Catholic population in Latgale, the Government [648]
signed a Concordat with the Vatican on May 30, 1922,[2] recognizing the Catholic Church as a corporate body, and establishing an Archbishopric at Riga, with the stipulation that the Archbishop must be a Latvian citizen and his appointment subject to the Government's consent.

Lithuania. Owing to its long historical connexion with Poland, 795
Lithuania has remained almost entirely Roman Catholic to this day. 659
In the Constitution of 1922 the State recognized the equal right of all religious organizations to administer their affairs, to publish their doctrines, and to acquire property. Religious education was to be [794]
compulsory in schools other than those established for the children of undenominational parents, and was to be in accordance with the requirements of the religious organization to which the student belonged.

[1] The result of the plebiscite was a defeat for the Government, which had previously rejected the Bill; in accordance with the Constitution, therefore, the State Assembly was dissolved, and new elections were held.

[2] A Supplementary Convention was signed during M. Munters' recent visit to Rome in January 1938.

000 requirements of the religious organization to which the student belonged.

665 648 The clerical Christian-Democratic party in Lithuania, which was also a nationalist and agrarian group, has played a far more important part in political life than its Lutheran counterparts in Latvia and Estonia; indeed, it was the dominant partner in every Government during the parliamentary phase, except for the short-lived Populist-Socialist Cabinet of June–December 1926. In spite of this fact, relations with the Vatican were for a long time extremely acrimonious, largely as a result of the Concordat concluded in 1925 between Poland and the Vatican, whereby the latter recognized the Vilna district as a Polish diocese. Popular indignation at the failure of the Government to change this situation was exploited by the Opposition in the elections of 1926 to secure the defeat of the Christian-Democrats, who, however, supported the Voldemaras Government formed in the following December. A Concordat was eventually negotiated in September 1927, whereby the limits of the ecclesiastical province of
● [793] Lithuania were to coincide with the existing frontiers; bishops were
[794] to be nominated by the Holy See, subject to the approval of the President of the Republic; although religious education was compulsory in all State schools, Catholic Churches might have their own schools, supported by the State.

659 648 In the autumn of 1930 there was a recrudescence of hostility when the Government suppressed the Catholic Youth Organization, on the ground that the Church was encouraging political propaganda against the Government, and arrested a number of Christian-Democratic leaders. An exchange of Notes between the Vatican and the Government, followed by a visit of the Papal-Legate, Mgr. Bartolini, to Rome in January 1931, failed to lead to a reconciliation, and in June Mgr. Bartolini was virtually turned out of the country. Relations improved somewhat after the appointment of Mgr. Faidutti as Papal Chargé d'Affaires in August; but up till now no general measure of agreement has been reached, and the Government has succeeded in getting the upper hand in its struggle with the Christian-Democratic party, which was suppressed in 1935. The new Constitution adopted in February 1938, which provides for the introduction of civil marriage and deprives the Church of its autonomy, has aroused considerable opposition in clerical circles.

4. Education[1]

872 Under the Russian régime primary education in the Estonian and Latvian Provinces reached a fairly high level; in 1886, 98 per cent.

[1] For statistics relating to the number and types of schools in the three countries, see footnotes on pp. 31, 34, and 38 above.

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populations were deeply rooted in tradition. Estonia, with a prewar population of 1,250,000, had about 900,000 Lutherans and approximately 215,000 Greek Orthodox. There was only a small group of Roman Catholics. Lithuania, on the other hand, with 3,000,000, was predominatingly Roman Catholic. Minorities of Lutherans, Jews, and Greek Orthodox constituted about one-fifth of the population. More than half of the population of Latvia belonged to the Lutheran Church, but there were substantial Catholic and Greek Orthodox minorities. The organizational activities of the Churches were varied and rich. In Lithuania, for example, with two archdioceses and four dioceses, more than 800,000 persons were enrolled in various lay organizations. The largest daily newspaper was in Catholic hands, and the total circulation achieved by the religious press was impressive. In Latvia likewise, publications under religious auspices numbered more than a fifth of those printed.

661 798 793 [794

The first Communist occupation, dating from June 15, 1940, engulfed all three nations in tragedy. The Russians decreed that every organization established before their seizure of control "jeopardized public security," and religious institutions and organizations were suppressed. Their property was confiscated, and they were forbidden to maintain any contact with the outside world. Religious instruction was curtailed drastically, the clergy being called upon to sign a pledge that they would desist from teaching religion either in public or in private. Waves of Communist propaganda, much of it directed against religion, passed over the country, burying every attempt at counteraction. Within a year the Russians had destroyed every overt vestige of the autonomous culture which these small countries had fostered during the limited time of their independence.

It was done ruthlessly, brutally, barbarously. More than

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661 60,000 Lithuanians were deported to Siberia. A number of
● 793 priests were murdered, and some are said to have been cruci-
798 fied. In Latvia and Estonia the numbers deported appear to have been smaller; but the clergy of all denominations were hounded, slain, and shipped to labor camps. It is no doubt correct to say that no year in the history of predatory imperialism since the dawn of time has been characterized by so complete a lack of restraint. The individuality of the peoples was rooted out with implacable determination.

661 The Nazis drove the Russians out again, but in turn re-
798 sorted to suppressions of their own. It was a time of dire dis-
697 tress for the Jewish minority, and of course also for anyone deemed to be opposed to their theories of race superiority. Deeply religious folk from the Baltic States were shipped to concentration camps. The Russians returned during the summer of 1944. This time large numbers of Lithuanians in particular fled to the West, the total being estimated at 80,000. Of the remaining inhabitants of the three countries, it is believed that more than 500,000 have been seized and sent off to Russian labor camps. There have been at least six round-ups of slaves. The first was in Estonia at the close of 1948, and it is believed that 50,000 persons were taken from their homes. The others have been carried out with the same irrational callousness. The deportations have stripped the countries affected of virtually all religious leadership which might have opposed Russian domination. Only 30 of Estonia's 250 Lutheran clergymen are still at work there, and comparable figures have been computed for Latvia. One Catholic priest out of five remains in Lithuania.

177 It is hardly necessary to state that the economies of the
461 countries affected are exploited for the benefit of Russia. But
861 one can grasp only with extreme difficulty the extent to which agents of Moscow dominate political and cultural activity.

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423 tem which prevails in the Soviet Union. Stalin has 26 or 27 kolkhozes dedicated to him; Lenin has 25; Marx, 6; and Engels, only 2. The kolkhozes named after Stalin are larger than the others and are situated in the most fertile regions. Whereas ordinary kolkhozes have some 120 cows, Stalin's have from 450 to 700. Workers on Stalin kolkhozes receive higher wages than are paid on others. Stalin kolkhozes are never criticized in the press and are invariably run by well known, active Communists. Other living Soviet leaders also have kolkhozes dedicated to them: Molotov has 9 named after him; Voroshilov, 7. Zhandov, who in 1940 accomplished the Sovietization of Estonia, has 6. Other kolkhozes with Russian names are Stalingrad, Volga, Ukraine, Gorki, Pushkin, and Lysenko. Not a single one, however, has been named for a living Estonian except that adorned with the cognomen of the Soviet Union's wrestling champion, Johannes Kotkas.

793 About the only notable action against a prelate of standing
687 which has been adequately reported is the trial of the Bishop of Danzig, Carl Maria Splett, who was brought to the dock for assisting the Nazi oppressors. The Bishop, a stanch and zealous man, protested his innocence; and there was no evidence whatsoever that he had in any way aided the infamous cause of the Nazis. He had, indeed, contended bravely against the depredations of Hitler's minions on the freedom and mission of the Church. Nevertheless *Osservatore Romano* reported, on February 3, 1946, that he had been sentenced to prison for eight years because he had "assisted the German occupants to the detriment of the Polish people." Bishop Splett is still in duress.

725 What we do know about the fate of these people rests upon an infinitely painstaking, imaginative piecing together of very small bits of information. Thus it is possible to say that there was considerable guerrilla resistance, particularly by peasants; that the armed bands were surrounded in the forest and mowed down; that villages were thereupon razed, as Lidice

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ultimate human meaning of the catastrophe which has befallen a country like Lithuania.

795 Lithuania, a Catholic land, lived by the precepts of the Church with the fidelity that is characteristic of Ireland. During 1939, more than 1,600 priests served a communion of nearly 3,000,000. Jesuits, Franciscans, and other religious were firmly established. There were nine bishops. One-fifth of all the books published in Lithuanian dealt with religious subjects. There was a vigorous Catholic press. Education was not divorced from religious teaching. All the things that are characteristic of Catholic countries—shrines, pilgrimages, seminaries, hospitals, organizations for the furtherance of Catholic social action—were amply in evidence.

The shock of finding all this irretrievably wiped out (or so it had to seem) must have been staggering indeed, even for the more parochially minded. In the eyes of so many deportees and escapees, I have seen utter bewilderment as if they had witnessed the unimaginable transformation of everything familiar into a jumbled amalgam each minute part of which was become terrifyingly strange. Human beings can survive great catastrophes intact, sometimes even strengthened, provided the basic communities in which their lives are merged—family, church, civil society—preserve their normal outlines. Otherwise they cannot do so.

• 793 Very little news comes from Lithuania. What does come indicates that the people have clung with moving fidelity to their faith. Only one member of the Lithuanian Hierarchy not in exile survives. He was recently compelled to attend a Peace Congress in Moscow, but was not asked to address the assembly. Fewer than one-third of the parishes still have pastors. It is reported that the Seminary at Kaunas still trains young men for the priesthood, though the number has become small. No new church may be erected, nor has any which was

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destroyed during the war been rebuilt. Nevertheless people gather for prayer and worship even when there is no priest to minister unto them. How implacably the wheels of oppression grind may be deduced from the following comment:

> Priests are obliged to pay income taxes in accordance with their rank. Thus a pastor must pay up to the amount of 100,000 rubles annually, and a curate up to half that amount. This means, in the case of a pastor, a sum as large as several of the salaries earned by the most highly paid civil servants. Of course it is impossible for the priests to meet these levies because the faithful, normally earning only a tenth of what it costs them to live, must slowly dispose of everything they own in order to exist. Ultimately the priests must pawn or sell not only everything they possess but also the property of the Church.

Thus broken fane and hunted priest and cowering faithful are symbols of Christianity in our day. What shall we say is the answer that comes from the heart of the West? Is Milosz right when he says that we not only forget about the 500,000 Lithuanians who have been deported to the slave-labor regions of Russia, but fail dismally as well to give our own industrial society dignity and richness? A peasant woman like the writer of the letter he cites must indeed have lived a narrowly circumscribed life. Yet somehow it had a rhythm which, regulated by the seasons, kept the sacredness of the seasons. Who does not occasionally think of the desiccated culture of the West, afflicted with a dry rot which must be in the bones of our education as well as in our social goals? An American, for example, who has observed the lives of so many of his countrymen abroad, veering from reading designed for minds unintelligent and smug alike to entertainment whose sole purpose is to provide a stylized commentary on raw passions, cannot but wonder whether the resources of pseudo-Christianity we fancy we have conserved will suffice for the long and bitter ordeal which lies ahead for us.